

PROPOSED POLICY RESOLUTION PPR-06AM-2

**TITLE: REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY
SELF DETERMINATION ACT**

WHEREAS, nationwide a significant percentage of the land within states is owned and managed by the federal government, which reduces property tax revenues for local governments and limits economic development opportunities that fuel local economies, particularly in western states that have large amounts of federal land; and

WHEREAS, Congress recognized the impact of federal land ownership on local communities by passing legislation in 1908 to compensate these communities by providing 25 percent of all revenues generated from the management of federal lands to local governments to be used for schools and roads; and

WHEREAS, for nearly a century these payments have constituted an important source of funding for the operation, maintenance, and construction of county roads and highways and as well as for rural education; and

WHEREAS, declining timber harvest on federal lands harmed the economies of many western communities and led to a precipitous drop in these payments to local governments, leading Congress to pass the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act of 2000 (PL 106-393) to restore payments to past levels and reaffirm the federal government's responsibility to local communities; and

WHEREAS, this legislation expires at the end of federal Fiscal Year 2006, causing significant losses to local governments for schools and roads if it is not reauthorized; and

WHEREAS, failure to reauthorize this legislation would lead to deterioration of the transportation system in many areas and put additional pressure on already stretched funding at state departments of transportation;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Congress is urged to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act of 2000, to continue to provide payments to local governments to compensate them for the loss of property taxes and economic development opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that WASHTO supports this program and recommends it to AASHTO for further action.